

FAMILY FOCUS



Especially for families and friends of deployed soldiers, information, events, and programs brought to you by Tobyhanna Army Depot Army Community Service.

Preparing for Separation

When your spouse joined the military, you realized that separations were inevitable. Knowing it can happen and being prepared may be the difference between a highly stressful situation and a tolerable one. In this article, we'll explore how you can prepare for the dreaded separations.

My first suggestion would be to realize that separations will happen and to talk about the expected changes with your loved one and children. All too often, we believe that if we don't talk about a situation, it will go away. A few months later we wish we had asked a few questions to better prepare ourselves. Sit down in a quiet place and make a list of anything you believe may be an issue while he/she is away. Ask any questions you have. Before your spouse leaves, he/she will be the best source of accurate information for you and your family.

Your spouse will more than likely be given the opportunity to prepare or update his/her will and power of attorney through base legal before the deployment. However, many financial institutions will not honor the power of attorney. If your spouse has credit cards or other payment accounts that you are not authorized to use, be sure to write down the account number, mailing address and payment amount for each. Some companies will not release any information regardless of the power of attorney if you are not an authorized user.

Be certain to check the expiration dates on you and your children's military identification cards. Although these can be renewed while your loved one is deployed, it requires power of attorney and the knowledge of where to go. If they will expire during the separation, have your spouse write down where to go and how to get them renewed for your family. Your military identification card is your link to your benefits such as the commissary, PX/BX, health and dental.

In most circumstances, the military will hold a family pre-deployment (support/readiness) briefing. Normally the commander, chaplain and other speakers will review documents you will need and other information for your particular situation or area. They will also give you phone numbers that you might find helpful such as the rear detachment number, family support group contact, Red Cross and others. Even seasoned spouses may find this helpful. You may discover new programs that weren't available in past separations.

Separations are more common today. Many military spouses already handle all the household finances. If your service member happens to be the one that handles the finances, take the time before he or she leaves to understand your budget and bills. Although no separation is easy, you can make the transition a lot easier with a little preparation.

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Dear Reader,

If you have a loved one or know someone that is deployed and you would like to be added to our mailing list. All you have to do is contact Sonya Walls at 570-895-6682 or sonya.walls@tobyhanna.army.mil and we will add you to the list.

Each month our newsletter is filled with informative information regarding deployment and ways to cope with separation. We look forward to hearing from you.